



## Pose & Practice Guide

The 2015 Yoga Challenge may have ended, but your yoga, stretching and relaxation practices can continue!

This guide can be an easy and convenient way to remember the poses and practices.

**Visit the Live Well website:**

[www.tinyurl.com/mcgwell](http://www.tinyurl.com/mcgwell)

for information about FREE weekly yoga classes and resources to help you relax and stay fit.

For more basic information about yoga, visit

<http://www.yogajournal.com/basics/820>

### How to use this guide:

- Poses can be strung together, into a sequence, or done on their own
- Always remember to listen to your body, breathe, and hold stretches for at least 10 seconds, moving into and out of the pose slowly
- If you are unsure about a position, ask a yoga teacher. If you are unsure about your physical capabilities, talk with your health care provider

# Day 1

## Pose: Mountain

Today's pose is the first, and one of the most important yoga poses.

Mountain pose is the foundational movement of all yoga poses. As we continue through the month, see if you can spot elements of Mountain in each of the other poses.

Special thanks to ***Karen, Belinda and Lucy, of the OHR Health & Employee Welfare team***, for demonstrating today's pose!

- 
- Stand or sit as tall as possible
- Ground your feet flat on the floor
- Lengthen your legs and spine
- Relax your shoulders, neck and facial muscles
- Bring your hands to your sides, palms forward, or raise them overhead, if possible
- Hold and breathe for 5 breaths

## Practice: Breathe

It sounds easy, but we can forget to breathe deeply when stressed. Take 5 long deep breaths, now, and anytime you feel stressed. Relax your body more with each breath



# Day 2

## Pose: Standing Forward Bend

A forward bend is one of the most relaxing types of yoga poses, and usually a welcome reprieve from our seated and stressful lives.

[Standing forward bend](#) is great for hamstrings (back of the thigh) and lower backs.

If you have tight hamstrings, soften your knees or try [half forward bend](#).



- From a standing position, slowly lean forward, reaching your hands towards your toes. Be gentle getting into and out of the pose
- When you reach the farthest point where you feel a stretch, but not pain, rest your hands on your legs, feet, or the floor-whatever is accessible
- If this feels very challenging, soften your knees. This will stretch the lower back more than the hamstrings, but will still be beneficial
- Relax your head, neck, and facial muscles. Imagine the stress draining out of your mind, onto the floor
- Hold for 5 long, deep breaths

*Thanks to **Suja Ali of HHS** for demonstrating today's pose!*

## Practice: 3 Minute Meditation

When our world is upside down, sometimes we need to turn our perspective inward, to release stress and build resiliency. Try this [3 minute meditation](#), courtesy of [UCLA Health](#). Sit back in your chair, turn up the computer speakers, close your eyes, and take a few moments for yourself.

# Day 3

## Pose: Child's Pose

Child's Pose is a resting pose and while simple, it is sometimes considered the most challenging pose.



In our busy world, it can be difficult to be still, calm, restful.

You can practice child's pose on the floor or from a seated position. The seated pose is perfect for stretching at your desk. *Thanks to **Melissa Davis**, Staffing Manager in OHR for trying today's desk pose!*

### For the desk pose:

- Push away from the desk
- Rest your hands on the desk and move your hips away from the desk
- Look down, towards the ground
- Stop when you are feeling a stretch, or when your arms align with your ears
- Lengthen your spine
- Hold and breathe for 5 breaths
- Be careful if you are using a rolling chair

## Practice: Belly Breathing

Have you ever watched a baby breathe? Their abdomen rises and falls effortlessly with each breath. **Take 5-10 deep breaths.** On every inhalation, let your abdomen expand like a balloon. On every exhalation, let your abdomen deflate.

## Bonus Practice: Days 4-5

We will not have poses for the weekend, simply relaxation practices.

The challenge for Saturday and Sunday (Days 4-5) will be **to 'unplug' for an hour each day.** Turn off the TV, cell phone, tablet or computer. Spend time with family or friends, outdoors or reading a book. Use your weekend to really 'recharge'!

# Day 6

## Pose: Cat & Cow

Today's poses are 2 for 1! We invite you to try two poses, [Cat](#) and [Cow](#), which go together. They both provide a great stretch for the back muscles. Use caution if you have any back injuries. There are two ways to practice Cat & Cow—seated in a chair or on all 4's on the floor. Do what works best for you!

***Kirk Murray** of Finance knows a few things about numbers, which made him the perfect participant to demonstrate our '2 for 1' poses!*

### For the seated pose:

Sit as tall as possible in your chair. Push away from the desk or table

### **For Cow Pose**

- Roll your shoulders back and down
- Lift your chest towards the ceiling, as if a string were drawing your heart upward
- Engage your abs, drawing your belly button towards your spine
- Allow your back to sway slightly, opening your chest to the sky

### **For Cat Pose**

- From cow pose, round your back slightly towards the back of your chair
- Tilt your hips under and bring your chin towards your chest
- Allow your shoulder blades to move apart
- Feel the stretch in your upper back



## **Practice: Fresh Air**

Spring has sprung! **Enjoy at least 10 minutes outdoors today.** Notice if you feel a difference in your energy or stress levels after your time outside.

Even better: Go for a walk outside this evening!



# Day 7

## Pose: Downward Facing Dog

Downward Facing Dog is a resting pose, similar to Child's Pose. *Thanks, **Angie Braun**, DEP for demonstrating Down Dog!*



If the challenge is too great, or you have any wrist or shoulder injuries, you can always stay in Child's Pose, or try a ["puppy dog" modification](#) on the wall.

**Ready to try Down Dog? Check out [this video](#), or follow the steps below!**

- From Cat/Cow pose (from April 6<sup>th</sup>), return to Child's Pose
- Extend your arms out in front of you, fingers spread wide on the ground
- Engage your abs, and slowly lift your hips, coming into an upside down V
- Leave a little space under your heels
- Your legs are straight, but not locked. Bend your knees if your muscles are tight
- Keep your spine in neutral, not rounded or arched
- Align your upper arms with your ears and relax your neck, lengthening it from the back
- Keep your fingers spread wide, pressing every knuckle to the floor
- Hold and breathe for 3-5 long, deep breaths

## Practice: It's Ruff!

Pets can have [a tremendous impact](#) on our [mental health](#) and physical wellbeing, lowering stress and blood pressure, and combatting depression. **Spend at least 10 minutes petting, or playing with, your favorite furry friend today.**

No pet? No problem! **Imagine petting a dog, cat, or horse, or watching an aquarium.** Even the visualization can release chemicals in the body to combat stress, similar to actually interacting with an animal. Close your eyes for 5 minutes (you can set a timer on your cell phone) and use your imagination, experiencing the scene with all of your senses.

# Day 8

## Poses: Plank & Crocodile

Combinations are the name of the game today, with two challenging poses, [Plank](#) and [Chatarunga](#) (aka Crocodile or Four Limbed Staff Pose). We are continuing through our Sun Salutation series. *Thanks to **Kendall Brown**, from OHR--today's pose rock star!*

If you are a beginner yogi, you can adapt both of these poses for the wall. You can also practice the poses with your knees on the ground, to make them easier. Plank can also be held on your forearms, instead of your palms. Be careful of wrist or shoulder issues, and remain mindful of form, especially in the lower back.

### Let's try [Plank Pose](#)!

- From [Downward Facing Dog](#), inhale to bring your body parallel to the floor, shoulders over your palms
- Lower your knees if you want to make it easier
- Be sure to keep your back flat, or neutral, not arched or rounded (like a plank of wood)
- Hold for 3-5 breaths, or as long as you are able, with good form
- Return to [Down Dog](#) or [Child's Pose](#) to rest or transition to Crocodile

### Ready for [Crocodile](#)?

- From [Plank Pose](#), bend your elbows, close to your body, lowering yourself down to the floor
- Lower your knees to the floor, if needed
- Keep your back straight
- Draw your shoulders away from your ears
- Hold with bent elbows for a breath or two
- Lower yourself gently to the ground.
- For more challenge, press up, towards plank, returning to Down Dog or Child's Pose



### Practice: Be a Rock Star

'Tune' into your stress and energy level today!

Turn on soothing music to [reduce stress](#) or crank up your favorite high-energy songs to boost your energy. Singing is optional.

# Day 9

## Pose: Baby Cobra

Thanks to **members of the Wednesday evening yoga class**, for demonstrating today's pose!



Today's pose, **Baby Cobra**, is our first back bend (aka 'heart opener'). Back bends are considered energizing poses (the opposite of relaxing forward bends, like down dog or child's pose). If you need an energy boost today, give Baby Cobra a try! As always, listen to your body and breathe. Avoid this pose if you have lower back concerns or are pregnant.

- Lay on the floor, on your abdomen, OR move from **Down Dog** through **Plank** and **Crocodile**, lowering yourself to the floor
- Press the tops of your feet into the ground
- Roll your shoulders back, away from your ears, drawing your shoulder blades together
- Place your hands under your shoulders
- Engage your abdominals
- As you inhale, lift your chest forward and up, away from the floor, without using your hands
- Keep your lower back in neutral and your feet pressed to the ground
- Hold for 3-5 breaths then release back to the ground
- Rest on the floor and, when ready, press up through plank and return to Down Dog or Child's Pose

## Looking for a standing or seated heart opener?

Return to our first pose, **Mountain**, standing or seated. Then, lift your heart towards the sky, as if it were lifted up by a string. Keep the lower back in neutral. Hold and breathe for 3-5 breaths.

## Practice: Gratitude

**Offer an authentic 'thank you' to someone today.**

Try to make it meaningful, beyond a quick 'thanks' when someone holds a door.



# Day 10

## Pose: Crescent Lunge

Today's pose can be a strengthening stance, or a serious stretch for the hip flexors. Hip flexors may become tight from sitting for long periods of time. Stretching them regularly may be beneficial for the hips and lower back.



The [High Lunge](#), demonstrated by **Melissa Garey**, on the left, is great for building strength while stretching. The [Low Lunge](#), shown by **Lu Wilson**, on the right, is an excellent stretch for the hip flexor muscles.

- From [Child's Pose](#) or [Downward Facing Dog](#), step your right foot forward. Use your hands for help, if needed. Alternatively, you can also start in a standing position, simply stepping your left foot back
- Align your knee over your ankle—do not let your knee overshadow your toes
- Sink your hips forward, towards the ground, until you feel a stretch in the front of your left hip.
- Engage your abdominals and lengthen your spine
- Be careful not to let your right heel lift from the ground
- You may raise your hands for more challenge. You can also keep hands on the ground, in low lunge
- If you want to go into high lunge, carefully lift your left knee away from the floor, until the knee is relatively straight, but not locked
- Make sure the knees and toes go the same direction
- Hold and breathe for 3-5 breaths.
- Repeat on the other side.



## Practice: Find Your Zen(tangles)

Have you heard of [Zentangles](#)? More than a doodle, Zentangles are a creative, moving meditation. Give Zentangles a try today.

## Weekend Practice: Plan Ahead

Take 2 small steps to lessen those stressors for the week ahead.

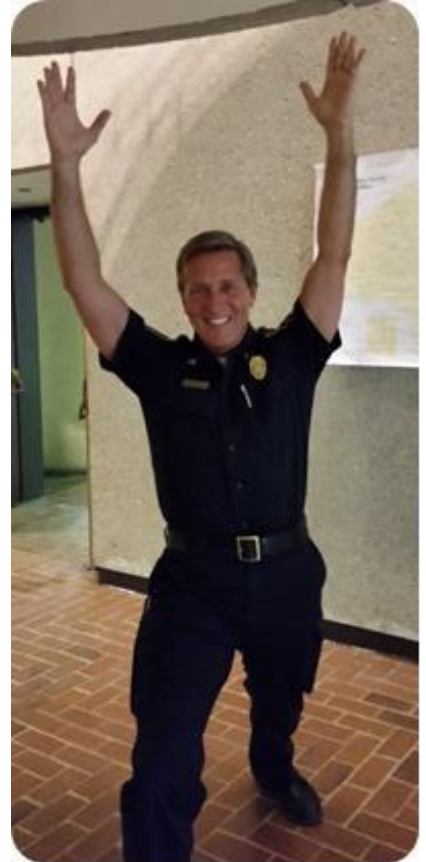
# Day 13

## Pose: Warrior I

We are kicking things up a notch today, with standing Warrior pose!

There are several Warrior poses in Yoga—today we'll tackle **Warrior I**.

- From Day 10's **Crescent Lunge**, or a standing position:
- Place your right foot behind you, turned out to approximately 45 degrees
- Keep your left foot forward, with the toe and knee facing straight ahead (legs are about hip-width apart)
- The left knee can bend—as much (up to a 90 degree bend, thigh parallel to the floor) or as little (barely any bend) as you want, or as much as your knees allow
- The right knee is straight, but not locked. The right heel is on the ground, press through the pinky toe
- Arms can be raised overhead or palms pressed together at heart-center
- Always keep your front knee over or behind the ankle—never over the toes
- Hold for 3-5 breaths and repeat on the other side.



*Thanks to **Bill Schantz**, member of the Security Services team, for demonstrating today's pose!*

## Practice: Tai Chi

Channel your inner martial artist, and fight shoulder tension, with this 2 minute beginner Tai Chi video: <https://youtu.be/WEKF4WazSOK>

**Want more Tai Chi?** Join us in the EOB Auditorium every Monday night at 5:30 pm for a FREE Tai Chi class!

# Day 14

## Pose: Warrior II

Our Warrior series continues today, with [Warrior II](#). Warrior II is a powerful pose that can build strength, endurance, and flexibility. *Thanks to the DOT & Commuter Services employees, **Sandra, Danita, Nakengi, Michael and Anne**, for demonstrating today's pose!*

From a standing position, begin [Warrior II](#):

- Open your feet a little wider than hip width apart
- Turn your left toes in, about 45 degrees
- Turn your right toes out, about 90 degrees
- Bend your right knee as much as you are able, keeping your right heel down, and the knee, aligned over or behind the ankle—never let the knee overshadow the toes, or move in/out
- Raise your arms to shoulder level, if possible. Roll the shoulders down and back, creating as much space as possible between the shoulder and ear
- Turn your head to the side, looking over your right arm
- Hold for 3-5 breaths
- Repeat on the other side
- Reminder: Be cautious with your knees, always keeping them aligned over the ankle, in the same direction as your toes

**Practice: Smiling**, and even [laughter](#), can stop stress in its tracks.

Be intentional today about smiling—in the midst of Warrior II, during difficult conversations, long lines in the grocery store, and anywhere else you may feel stressed.



# Day 15

## Pose: Tree Pose

Tree Pose is all about finding stillness and stability, even when it's challenging. Thanks to members of the **DGS team** for demonstrating Tree pose!

Try Tree Pose:--from a standing position:

- Shift your weight to your right foot
- Slowly lift your left foot from the floor. There are a few options:
  - **Beginner:** Lift your left heel only, keeping your right toe on the ground. Place your left heel on the side of your leg, near your ankle
  - **Intermediate:** Lift your entire left foot from the floor, placing it on your lower leg, turning the knee out, and toes down to the floor. Avoid putting your foot on your knee
  - **Advanced:** Lift your entire left foot from the floor, placing it on your right inner thigh, turning the knee out, and toes down to the floor. Be careful not to put your foot on your knee—go above the knee, or below
- Raise your arms overhead, or keep the hands pressed together near your heart, or by your sides
- Hold and breathe for 3-5 breaths per side
- If you are new to yoga, or concerned about balance you can place your hand on the wall or a table. If you need extra support, stand with your back against a wall as you try tree pose, or another modification

## Practice: Positivity

Take a moment, maybe before you fall asleep, or on your way home, to review the day. **Find at least one positive thing that happened today.** Focus on it for a moment, letting go of any negative things that happened, any worries about what has happened or is yet to come.



# Day 16

## Pose: Pigeon Pose

Standing and Seated [Pigeon Poses](#) are variations on an excellent hip opening stretch. Be gentle with this pose if you have any knee or hip concerns. *Thanks to **Gary and Lorna** from DGS for showing todays pose!*

### For the beginner seated pose (right):

- Sit tall in your chair
- If possible, cross the left leg, over the right leg, at the ankle
- Flex your left ankle (the opposite of pointing it)
- To deepen the stretch, lean forward with a flat back until you achieve a stretch,
- Hold for 3-5 breaths. Repeat on the other side



### For the advanced standing pose (left):

- Stand tall
- Position yourself near a wall or table, in case you need help with balance
- Squat backwards, keeping the knees over the ankle
- Lift your right leg, cross it over the standing leg, at the ankle
- Hold for 3-5 breaths. Repeat on the other side

## Practice: Email Meditation

Before you send a difficult message today, or even post on social media, ***draft the message but don't hit send. Sit back, away from the desk, with feet flat on the floor, hands resting on your lap.*** Close your eyes, relax, and take 3 long, deep breaths. Notice how your body feels...tense or relaxed. Anxious or calm.

Put yourself in the recipient's shoes. ***How would you feel or respond if you received the drafted message?***

Sit with that for a moment. Take 3 more deep breaths and gradually return to the present moment. Re-read the message. ***Do you still want to hit send? Send the message or make edits.***



# Day 17

## Pose: Eagle Pose

'Unwind' from a long week with today's pose, [Eagle](#). The lower body portion of the pose can be challenging, especially for those who have knee concerns. If you are more advanced, feel free to give it a try. Otherwise, we suggest trying the upper body portion of the pose.

*Thanks to **Susanne and Melissa** from DEP, for taking time out of their busy day to demonstrate Eagle pose!*

Melissa, on the right, is doing the modified version of the pose. To try the modified version:

- Sit or stand tall
- Cross your right wrist over the left wrist
- Press your palms together
- Lightly exert a little pressure, as if you were clapping your hands
- Feel the shoulder blades moving apart
- Hold for 3-5 breaths
- Reverse

Susanne, on the left, is demonstrating the more **advanced version** of the pose.

Check out this [video](#) for instruction.

## Practice: Random Acts of Kindness

The resiliency building practice this week is simple.

**Strive to complete at least one random act of kindness, on Days 17, 18 and 19.** Notice the person's reaction, and how you feel as a result.

*"Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you." Princess Diana*



# Day 20

## Pose: Side Stretching Mountain Pose

- Start in [Mountain Pose](#), seated or standing
- Lengthen your spine
- As you inhale, raise your left arm and circle overhead until you feel a stretch through your left side (rib cage, abdominals, etc).
- Try to keep your spine in neutral and chest as open as possible.
- Hold for 3 deep breaths
- Slowly reverse, stretching to the right



## Practice: S.T.O.P.

Food cravings and emotional eating can thwart our attempts to eat healthfully, and can feed our physical body, without addressing the stress, anger, sadness or other emotions that cause the craving.

Before reaching for the potato chips, chocolate, or beverages that you are craving, [read or watch this meditation](#) about the acronym STOP:

- **S: Stop:** Stop what you are doing. Step away from the refrigerator or push back from your desk
- **T: Take 3 deep breaths:** Close your eyes, relax your body and clear your mind.
- **O: Observe:** Note your surroundings, people around you, and how you are feeling mentally and physically
- **P: Proceed:** Proceed in a way that truly supports your needs. If you really want to act on the craving, do so without guilt and enjoy it, without any distractions. If you don't really need the food or drink, but instead need sleep, comfort, a release of anger, make the decision that will truly be most helpful.

*Thanks to **Jenna Shovlin**, OHR & **Bernadette Hope** and **Will Johnson**, DOTR for 'driving' today's pose!*

# Day 21

## Pose: Cow Face

**Cow Face Pose** requires a little imagination. The pose is named 'Cow Face' because the full expression of the arms represents cow ears (see the demo-on right). The lower body pose represents cow lips.



We are going to focus on the upper body-portion of the movement. More advanced participants may attempt the [full pose](#), but we suggest exercising caution with the lower body pose—it can be challenging for knees and hips. *Special thanks to **Paula Van Hagen and Antoinette Brunson, DOT**, for showing today's pose!*

- Sit or stand as tall as possible
- Raise your right arm towards the ceiling
- Bend your right elbow and walk your fingers down your spine
- Use your left hand for assistance as needed, or to gently deepen the stretch
- Look straight ahead, lengthening the back of the neck
- Remember to keep shoulders down and back, helping to protect the joint
- Keep the upper arm in alignment with the ear
- Hold for 3-5 breaths and repeat on the other side

**Practice: Create an Oasis** Do your surroundings help support stress relief? Whether at home or work, take at least one small step today to creating a calm environment. A few ideas for the office:

- Add a favorite picture to your desk or wall
- Bring in a plant
- Change your desktop image to a favorite photo
- Place a soft blanket within reach for chilly days
- Keep herbal teas or sugar-free peppermints (and a mug) on-hand
- Stash sneakers, exercise clothes and a mat or weights at your desk. Perfect for conference calls, an afternoon walk or taking a [lunchtime exercise class](#)
- Align your desk in an [ergonomically appropriate way](#)

# Day 22

## Pose: Seated Twist

We'll transition today from standing poses to seated poses. You can practice these poses from a chair or the floor. **Josephine Tao** from DTS, demonstrates the desk version of today's pose: [Seated Twist](#).

You can also practice a more advanced version, like [Marichi's Pose](#), on the floor. Be gentle, or avoid, twists if you have any back concerns or are pregnant. Never force a twist.

- For the desk version:
- Sit tall with your feet grounded, flat on the floor
- Roll your shoulders down and back
- Place your left hand on your thigh or chair arm
- Place your right hand behind you or on the chair
- Inhale to sit taller
- Exhale to begin twisting, gently, to your right
- Rotate through your rib cage, shoulders, and head
- You may use your arms for support
- Hold for 3-5 breaths, return to center.
- Repeat on the other side



## Practice: Ground Yourself

How are you supporting your wellbeing, and the wellbeing of the world around you? Try one of these practices today, for your health, and the health of the environment:

- **Get off one bus stop earlier, or park farther from your destination.** Walk those extra steps, focusing on the present moment, without cell phones or other distractions
- **Spend at least 5 minutes outdoors today.** Notice if you feel more relaxed as a result
- **Try a [forest visualization](#) or 'secret garden' meditation:** Set a timer for 2 minutes, close your eyes, breathe deeply, and use all of your senses to experience an imaginary secret garden—smell the fresh air and flowers, hear birds singing, feel the soft soil beneath your feet, touch the tree bark, see the green and colorful garden before you. Imagine it as a place of security, calm, refuge. You can return to this garden any time you wish.

# Day 23

## Pose: Bow

You have plenty of options for today's pose! Bow pose can be done standing, [reclined](#) or on your abdomen.

We suggest starting with the [standing](#) or reclined options and only progressing to the last option when you are more advanced and have a healthy lower back.

Bow pose provides a great stretch for the front of the thigh, the quadriceps, and hip flexor muscles.

**Judy Davis** is demonstrating the [standing Bow Pose](#) (aka Pose of the Dancer)

From a standing position:

- Position yourself near the wall or a table, in case you need support while balancing
- Find your balance on your right leg
- Roll your shoulders back and down, and engage your abdominals
- Use your left arm to grab your left ankle, or pant leg (if you can't reach either of those easily, you can wrap a necktie, yoga strap or belt around your left ankle, holding the ends)
- Draw your left knee towards your standing leg
- Keep the left ankle aligned with the knee, not out to the side
- Raise your right hand, if desired
- For more challenge, lean forward slowly, kicking back, against your left hand
- Hold for 3-5 breaths, if possible, then reverse



Click here for the [reclined](#) pose, on the floor.

## Practice: Sweet Dreams

Sleep sound. Strive to get at least 7 hours of sleep tonight. Notice how you feel tomorrow morning.



# Day 24

## Pose: Seated Forward Bend

[Seated Forward Bend](#) is perfect for stretching the lower body and back. You can try the traditional, floor-based pose, as shown by **Martin Mayne, DOT**, below.

You can also try this [desk version](#) or a [standing variation](#).



- Sit on the floor, as tall as possible
- Extend your legs in front of you, close together with toes towards the ceiling
- Inhale to raise your arms overhead
- Exhale to reach forward, toward your toes
- When you reach the point where you feel a stretch and cannot go further, let your hands rest on the legs, floor or feet. It's important to use your hands for lower-back support. Do not press on the knee.
- Hold for 3-5 breaths
- Slowly transition back to an upright position
- If you have tight hamstrings or lower back muscles, you can bend your knees a little in this pose. You will still feel a lower back stretch.

## Practice: Thinking Ahead

Like exercise, **the best stress relief practice is the one you will do**. As we near the end of the Yoga Challenge, we invite you to think ahead, to next month, and beyond. What poses or practices did you find beneficial? What do you hope to continue? Is there anything new you want to try?

**Day 24:** Try aromatherapy today! You don't have to just use traditional lavender or essential oils. Try smelling a green apple, chamomile tea, mint, or kitchen spices that remind you of home cooked meals.

**Day 25:** Think about your Yoga Challenge experience. What did you find helpful?

**Day 26:** Make a plan to continue moving and managing stress. Write it down, so you can refer to it when needed.

# Day 27

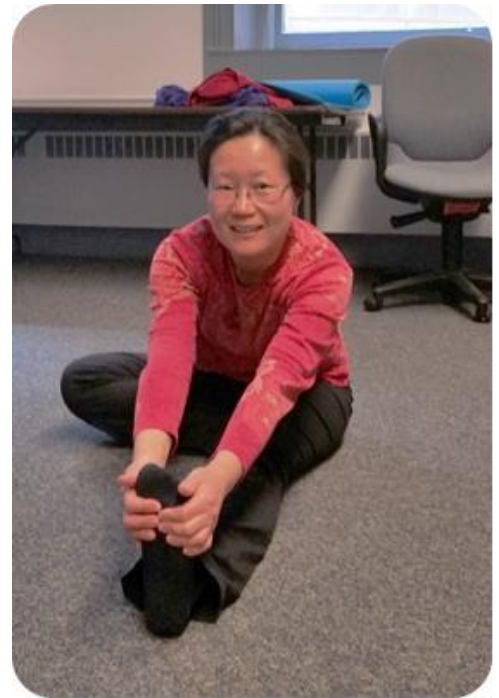
## Pose: Head to Knee Pose

The name of this pose, [Head to Knee Pose](#), can be intimidating. Don't worry if you can't touch your head to your knee, or even come close to it! Our goal is to safely stretch the hamstring, lower back and [IT band](#) muscles.

If you have any lower back issues, be gentle with this stretch, or repeat the [Seated Forward Bend](#) pose from Friday. Looking for a desk version of the pose? Repeat Friday's Forward Bend in the [desk version](#). If it's ok for your lower back, you can add a slight variation by reaching towards the pinky toe side of the leg.

### Julia Liu, DEP, shows the seated position:

- Extend both legs in front of you
- Bend the left leg, as comfortable, bringing your left foot to your right inner thigh
- Flex your right foot, toes towards the ceiling
- Sit as tall as possible
- Inhale to reach overhead
- Exhale to reach forward, as far as comfortable.
- Strive to reach forward, not down
- Lower the hands to the leg, floor, or foot
- Keep the spine long and both hips grounded
- Hold for 3-5 breaths
- Slowly straighten the left leg, returning to the starting position.
- Repeat on the other side



## Practice: Take the Next Step

Did you create a plan this weekend for managing stress and taking care of yourself?

If so, great! **Take one tangible step to implementing that plan today.**  
If you haven't created a plan yet, now is the chance!

# Day 28

## Pose: Neck Stretches

Do you carry tension in your shoulders and neck?

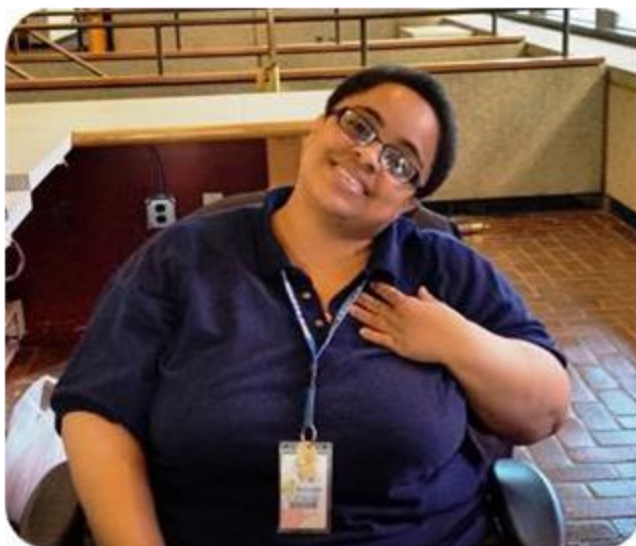
If so, try this stretch, *demonstrated by Eileen Stevenson*, throughout the day to help relieve tense, tight muscles in your upper back.

- Sit or stand as tall as possible
- Let your arms hang by your sides
- Relax your shoulders, letting them fall down, towards the ground
- Tilt your head to the right, bringing your ear towards your shoulder
- Continue to relax your shoulders
- Hold for 3-5 breaths, gently return your head to center, and repeat on the other side

## Practice: Write a Letter

**Write a letter to your future self.** It may seem strange, but draft an email or letter to yourself, that you can read in 6 months. You can ask a friend to mail the letter, place it somewhere out of the way and set an electronic reminder for yourself, or try delaying the send via email.

Tell yourself what you need and want to hear. Remind yourself to take care of yourself, through relaxation practices, yoga, or something else entirely. Lift yourself up and be your best champion.



# Day 29

## Pose: Legs Up the Wall

We are nearing the end of the Yoga Challenge, so the poses may become easier, with more focus on the deepening of breath and relaxation.

Try today's restorative pose, [Legs Up The Wall](#). The full pose, on the floor, can help you relax in the evening, before bed.



If you are practicing at work, or are unable to lie on the ground, follow **Taylor Austin**, below, demonstrating today's pose:

- Sit tall in your chair
- Place another chair in front of you.
- Prop your feet up on the chair, with legs extended in front of you.
- Relax and take 5-10 long deep breaths
- Slowly return to a regular seated position with feet on the floor

## Practice: Walk @ Lunch

Make every day Walk @ Lunch Day! Take at least a 10 minute walk today. Notice if you have more energy afterwards. Unable to walk? Spend at least 10 minutes outside enjoying the spring air and sunshine.





# Day 30

## Pose: Savasana

Congratulations, you did it! We'll close the month with the most important pose—**Savasana**. Savasana is the most important pose because it's where all of the mental and physical benefits of yoga 'sink in'. Savasana is typically done on the ground, lying on the back (bend the knees and put feet flat on the floor for lower back support).

Practice Savasana in the office by sitting in a chair or standing. *Thanks to **Melissa** for demonstrating the seated position.*

- Sit in a chair with feet flat on the floor, or fully supported
- Relax into the seat, with your back supported, sitting tall but comfortably
- Let your shoulders relax downward
- Turn your palms forward
- Close your eyes
- Relax the mind, focusing on the breath or any other word or image you find relaxing
- Hold for 5-10 long deep breaths, or set an alarm for 1-5 minutes

The pose can also be done standing, if needed. *Thanks to **Francesca, Lystra, and Alessandra** for showing the standing pose.*

## Practice: Savasana

Today's pose and practice are the same! Savasana, translated to Corpse Pose, is about **leaving behind the old ways** of thinking and doing, and starting anew. Simply be present in this moment, if only for a few seconds, without worrying about the past or future.

